



# **¶ Here foloweth**

the boke of Solomō  
called Ecclesiastes /  
(which is to say in  
Englishe / a pre-  
cher) .



**T**he sermons of Solomon  
sonne of David/ kynge  
of Jerusalem.

**A**ll thynges at all tyme are  
subiect vnto vanite (saith  
this precher) ther is nothyng els  
but very vanytie. What els getteth  
man of all thyng; vnder the  
sonne (laboure he neuer so soze)  
but vanite? One age goth and a  
nother cometh/ but the erth aby-  
deth styll. The sonne ryseth and  
goth downe/ returning vnto his  
place to rise agayne. Nowe bloweth  
the wynde agaynst y south  
and anon it returneth agaynst y  
north / thus turnyng cōtynually  
about agayn vnto y place where  
it began. All ryuers runne in to  
the see/ & yet riseth it nat so hygh  
as to passe her bownes/ but she

A. ii.

sens



sendeth them backe agayne to re-  
tourne into her. All thynges for  
their vnstable mutabylte are to  
harde & high for mānes capacitye  
for as nothig can satisfie the eye/  
so desyreth the care euermore to  
here. What thing hath ther ben/  
but a like succedeth & is to come:  
ye/ what thing hath ther bē done  
but a lyke is & shal be/so y vnder  
the sonne is ther nothing newe.

Is there any thinge of whiche  
it may be sayd. No/this is newe/  
No verely. For it hath ben befor  
tyme: & as thynges paste growe  
out of mīde with vs: so shal thin-  
ges present be forgotten with thē  
that folow vs. I my self beyng a  
precher/ & kynge ouer Israel abi-  
dyng in Ierusalem: endeuoured  
my selfe delygētly & wysely to en-  
serche the knowlege of euery thi-  
ge

ge vnder the sonne. But lorde/  
how heuy & tedious is this stu-  
dy/ which god hath gyue to mor-  
tall men thus to wery thē selues  
in so serchyngē. But yet I consy-  
dered al thinges made vnder he-  
uen: & lo/ I could espye nothig e-  
ls/ but that all was but vanite &  
mysery. The croked can nat be  
made right / nor the faulte that  
dayly slyppe away can nat be nō-  
bred. Thā thus thought I with  
my self: Se / I am clere & mygh-  
ty/ excellyng of all men in wyses-  
dom that were euer before me in  
Ierusalem: I haue promoted &  
encreased the study of wysedome  
& knowlege of all thynges: I ga-  
ue my selfe hole by longe experi-  
ence to get wysedom/ and also to  
know the mad folyshnes of mē.  
But this myn enforcemēt I felte  
it to



it to be no nother thā a miserable labour & laborous turnētyng of my mynde: For where is moche wisdom/ there is as moch affliction & trouble/ & who so contenteth to haue experyence & knowlege of many thinges / he wrappeth him selfe in moche labour & heupnesse.

## Cap. ii.

**W**herfore I thoust thus w<sup>t</sup> my self sayēg: Well I shal take me to moze ease & plesure/ to laugh & be mery. But lo/ all this was eyn also very vanite. & I tolde laughter/ thou makest mē madde I said vnto spozte & mirth: what dost thou: art thou mad to: And here thā I decreed w<sup>t</sup> my selfe to w<sup>d</sup>raw my fleshe frō wyne/ & to set my herte so wisely to optayne prudence/ that I myght also en-

struete

struete and lerne other what they shulde do/ & shew thē what is gode & profitable as lōge as they lyue. I attempted also to bringe about many/ both noble & gret thinges: I buylded costely houses/ & plated vyne yardes / I made me gardēs as swete as paradyse/ set with all maner frutful trees/ & couated my cundyt/ with water to mynistre moistenes vnto euery yōg tre. I had seruātes/ hād maydens/ & a gret famely. I had gretter herds of bestes & shepe thā all y<sup>e</sup> wer befor me i Jerusale. I had gathered me golde & syluer/ with oth<sup>r</sup> treasure as besemed any kig what so euer he were. Thā did I ordeyne me syngers & dauncers both men & womē/ whō to here & beholde was gret plesure/ of whō some were my cup beters: so that there



there was neuer none lyke me in  
 Jerusalem: natwithstādyng yet  
 dyd wysedome abyde styll with  
 me: And what so euer my eyes de  
 syred/ they had it: Neither dyd  
 I nat withdraue my hert to any  
 pleasure/ but dyd recreate my sel  
 fe in euery labour. And this plea  
 saunt frute me thought my selfe  
 well worthy for my trauell. But  
 after this at laste began I to cō  
 syder & expende all my dedes: &  
 lo/ al were very vanite & misery/  
 & nothyng stable vnder the sōne.  
 Thā I turned me to beholde my  
 wysedome/ & I sawe it but mad  
 nes & folishenes/ for what mā is  
 there/ which can cōtrefayt & fol  
 lowe that kynge which hath ma  
 de hi: And here I spyed as gret  
 differēce betwixt very wysedome  
 and folishenes/as betwixt light  
 and

and darkenes/ & that for bycause  
 the wisemānes eye stādeth in his  
 heed/ & the fole gropeth in derke  
 nes. And ouer this yet I percey  
 ued that in the meane season one  
 gothe his waye lyke the tother.  
 And than I thought: Sith it ha  
 pen to me euen as it doth to the  
 fole: wherfore contēde I with so  
 great studye to be wyse: And yet  
 euen here perceyued I the same  
 thought to be but vanite: For as  
 sone is the wyse forgotten as the  
 fole/sith althynge alyke by pcesse  
 of tyme goth out of mynde: And  
 as the iuste/ so dieth y fole. Wher  
 fore it yzked me of my lyfe/ for no  
 thyng vnder the sōne coude plea  
 se me/ sith I perceyued it al to be  
 but vanite / labour / & affliction.  
 Thā did I abhorre al myn own  
 laborous enforcemētes vnder y  
 sonne:



sonne: for that I must be compelled to leue them to some mā that folowe me. For who knoweth y man to come whether he shall be wyse or a fole: And yet muste he be my heyze / & rule i my labours and goodes gotten wisclly vnder the sonne. And euen all this yet was it but vanite. wherfore I determined playnely with my selfe to cease from all study & traueyl offered me vnder the sonne: For a man / bring he his enforcements to passe with neuer so gret wysdome / prudence / and policy / yet muste he be compelled at laste to leaue the vnto an vnknowē heyze that neuer dyd sweate for them. And this is also but vanyte and carefull heynesse. For what els getteth man with all his sore study and wery traueyle aboute all thynges

thynges vnder the sonne / thā parpetuall dolour / heynesse / trauel and care of all his lyfe longe / so that nyght nor daye hath he no quyet mynde: And euen this / is also but vanyte. Is it nat than better for man to eat and drynke & recreat his mynde amonge these careful afflictions: for this cometh of the goodnes of god. who euer lyued more sūptuously & lyberally thā I: But herely whō god fauoureth / hi wyl he gyue wisdom prudence / knowlege / & gladnes. But vnto the sinner he giueth in fortune & care to gather & heap riches for him that pleaseh god / wherfore / euen this also is butte vanyte.

**A**l thynges accordynge to their tyme be subiect vnto muta



mutacion: And nothing vnder þe  
 sonne is pmanent. For what so e-  
 uer is now borne / it hath a tyme  
 to dye. Nowe be thiges planted  
 which at their tyme must be pluc-  
 ked vp agayne. Now it is slaine  
 which befoze we studyed to hele.  
 Now it is destroyed / that befoze  
 was buylded. Now we wepe / &  
 anon we laugh. Now heuy / now  
 we leap for ioye. We cast awaye  
 stones / which anon we gather in  
 agayne to buylde with all. Now  
 at men giuen to loue in wedlock  
 and anon they abhoze it. Nowe  
 we seke / which and we lese. Now  
 we kepe / which and we cast away  
 Now we tere & ryppe / which be-  
 foze we sewed toggyther. There  
 is a tyme to be styl / & tyme to spe-  
 ke. Now we loue that we hated.  
 Nowe we pclame batell agaisst  
 them

them with whom we noursyshed  
 peace. What pleasure may man  
 haue in these so repugnant heuy  
 labours. But hereof I pceyued /  
 god to cast all these heuy heapes  
 of affliction vpon mā / to bere &  
 torment hi self with al. For what  
 so euer god made / he dyd it good-  
 ly in tyme and order / & so dyd he  
 set it forth befoze the worlde also  
 to be done / & euen the consydera-  
 cion & creatiō of the worlde hath  
 he engrauen in mānes herte: but  
 yet neither the begynnyng nor en-  
 de of þe workes of god can no mā  
 enserche nor cōpse in his herte.  
 Wherfoze I thought nothyng  
 better in this worlde / than a mā  
 to make mery & cheryshe him self  
 whyle he lyueth. For to eate and  
 drinke with a glad hert / amonge  
 so many forowful labours / is the  
 gyfte



gyft of god. For I know it verely that what soeuer god worketh it is fast perfyte & perpetuall/ neither may there any thinge be put to/ nor taken from his workes. which all/ god doth to declare himself to be reuerently feared. Thynges done dayly retourne agayn: and thynges that were to come be lately done. For the lord cōsydering the transitory state of all thynges restoreth the vs agayne.ouer this yet I saw y<sup>e</sup> scales of iuges/ in which there raigned vngodlynes/ for where iustyce shulde be ministered there dyd sit y<sup>e</sup> wiked. And here than I thought w<sup>th</sup> myself: The lord is the very true iuge both of the iust and vngodly: For euery thought/ all counsels & werkes that euer were or shalbe/ shall be brought before him to be iuged

iuged at their tyme. Than after a lyke maner I cōsydered the careful state of man: how the lord exercyseth him in suche laborous misery/ that they appere nothing better than bestes/ for they haue both a lyke ende to dye: and a lyue they agre nat moche vnylike/ as one dieth/ so dyeth the tother: so that the chaunce of one semeth nat to be better than the tothers. & all is but vanite that chaunceth to them both/ & all at last come to one place: For as all came of dust so retourne they in to erth again. who can tell whether the spyryte of man ascēdeth vpwādes: and whether the breath of bestes go downwardes into the erth with their bodies: Wherefore me thynketh it beste for man to be merye and glad in the myddes of thys myse



miserable state / for no parte els  
shall he haue: & who shall bryng  
him agayn to se what shal be he-  
re done after him.

## Cap. iiii.

**A**ND yet I tourned me a-  
gayn to behold the iniust  
oppzession of men in this worlde  
& lo / I saw the teares of the op-  
pressed w<sup>t</sup> wronge / no mā nether  
helpig nor cōfortig thē. For they  
tyrannous oppzessours were of  
suche myght that no man myght  
resyst them: whiche thynge con-  
sydered / I thought thē to be hap-  
pyer and better at ease / whiche  
be now ded / than them that yet  
lyue. Ye / I iuged that man to be  
happier than either of them both  
whiche is yet vnborne / whiche  
hath nat yet sene these manifolde  
myscheues commytted vnder the  
sonne.

sonne. Thā loked I vpon the la-  
borous enformentes & vnweary  
studyes of euery mā: & I percey-  
ued al togyder full of enuye & de-  
ceyte: which al is but very vani-  
te & mcer mysery. And here / the  
folyschmā abhorring al this clas-  
ped his hādes together vntyll he  
was constayned for his ydelnes  
to eat his owne fleshe: thinkyng  
nethles moche better to haue but  
an handfull with rest / than both  
his handes full with labour and  
carfull calamite. Ouer this / I  
turned me & behelde yet another  
gret vanite in this world: I saw  
men liuyng sole without chylde  
or kyn / & yet neuer ceased they la-  
bourig & trauelig day nor night /  
no riches coulde satysfye their in-  
saciablc eyes: no / they coulde ne-  
uer thus thynke: Wherfore do I  
thus



thus wery & weake my selfe : for  
whom do I thus cōsume my self  
with care : for whose pleasure &  
p̄fyte do I thus spare myn owne  
goodes fro myn owne mouth I s  
nat this very vanite & unhapp  
heuy labour : It is better / it is  
better therfore / two to lyue togy  
der than one alone / that yet eche  
may refresh the tother with the  
frutes of theyr comune labour : &  
especially / if one fal / yet y tother  
felow helper may be redy at han  
de to helpe hi vp again : If two  
slepe togyder one shall warme &  
nourishe the tother : for how may  
one alone defēde hym self fro the  
iniuriousse colde : Also one alone  
(if any wolde hurte hym) is sone  
ouercome : but two togyder may  
resyst . For a threweythed rope  
is nat so sone broken . A poze yōg  
man

man y wylc is & prudēt / is better  
than an old dottysse ruler / that  
folysse is and vncircūspecte . It  
happeneth ofte that one crepeth  
out of pryson to the kyngdome /  
where agayne a nother borne to  
be kyng / perissheth for pouertye .  
And I saw a gret multytude vnder  
the sonne / folowynge and de  
pēdynge of a nother yong man to  
succeede his father in the kigdom  
euen as great a nombze as euer  
folowed his father / some befoze  
and some after : & yet was the fa  
ther neuer so honozouse vnto the  
as shall this his sonne be : to de  
syre therfore a nother kyng / what  
elles is it / than very vanyte :

## Cap. v.

Whan thou goist into y house  
of the lozde / take good hede vnto  
thy fete / & applye thy herte to  
prayer



prayer and hearing of his worde:  
 for this is moche better than the  
 offeraunces of folysh men / which  
 knowe nat what synne in so doig  
 they comytte. Let nat thy tonge  
 runne before thy mynde / neither  
 thy herte to hasty to speke before  
 god: for God is in heuen / & thou  
 in erth / wherfor vse thou but few  
 wordes. For lyke as moche study  
 & care in the day engendre many  
 dreames / so ar many wordes the  
 very tokē of gret folyshnes. But  
 & if thou promise any thyng vn-  
 to god / pay it without delay. For  
 soles please hi nat. If thou there-  
 fore promisest hi / pay it him: For  
 it is better nothyng to vow / thā  
 neuer to performe thy vowe. Be  
 ware therfore lest thy subtile tō-  
 gue wrappe thy fleshe in synne.  
 Neither shalte thou thinke that  
 thou

thou praeist or vowest before any  
 aungell: for they knowe vs nat:  
 but it is god whom thou makest  
 angrie with prayng many wor-  
 des & folysh vowe: whiche shal  
 distroie all suche workes of their  
 owne inuencion. Where are ma-  
 ny dreames / there is moche vani-  
 te & no lesse word. But thou ther-  
 fore se that thou seruest & cleue to  
 god. And if thou seest the poore  
 afflicted / oppressed with wronge  
 & both iugement & equite subuer-  
 ted & violently plucked out of the  
 erth / yet meruell thou nat gretly  
 at this boldnes. For this oppres-  
 sor / be he neuer so alofte / yet is  
 there one higher thā he / obseruig  
 and watchyng ouer him: & yet a-  
 boue them both are there their su-  
 perious to / ye / & ouer al these /  
 yet is there the kynge of the holic  
 lande



lande/ euen he/ whose tylling al  
feldes obey. Who so loueth mo-  
ney / shall neuer haue ynoughe.  
And he that gapeth for rychesse /  
shall neuer haue profyt of them:  
and euen this is vanyte also. For  
where is haboundance of ryches /  
there ar many deuourers of the /  
to eat them vpp: And what pro-  
fyte hath the possessoure of  
them els/ than for a whyle to fede  
his eyes with them? Swete is  
the slepe y crepeth ouer the trow  
labourer/ whether he eateth lytel  
oz moch: but the ryche wealy / so  
swetely to take his reste / surfets  
shall nat suffre him. The mooste  
greuouse plage / y I perceyued  
to be vnder the sone / is a man to  
possesse riches into his own deth  
and vndoynge. For rychesse pe-  
rissch nat with out the great afflic-  
tion

tyon & tormētinge of their owne  
possellour: which good wil both  
slippe away fro him & his chylde  
to: & as naked as euer they came  
both out of theyr mothers wombe /  
shal they retourne & go hence / no-  
thing carpyenge away of all their  
heuy labours. This (I say) is y  
moost myserable affliction / to re-  
tourne (for al our carfull labour)  
as naked as we cam. What thā p-  
fyteth it mā thus i vaine w<sup>th</sup> his so-  
rowful labours / to bete y wide:  
All dayes of his lyfe hath he spa-  
red & lyued full miserably / etyng  
but pozely / & that w<sup>th</sup> no lesse so-  
rowe & care / thā angre & affliction  
of body & myde. Lo / me thiketh it  
therfore best to eate & drinke & to  
be mery in the myddes of these la-  
bours / vntyl the ende of our lyfe  
come which god hath apoynted.  
For



For euen this is our porciō. And what so euer he be vnto whō the lord hath gyue riches & power / if he can in his labours ete & drinke with a mery hert / receiuyng it for his porcion: surely it is the very gyfte of god. For this man breketh nat his brayn / neither aboute the length of his lyfe / nor the incommodities therof / for that the lord thus replenisheth hys herte with ioye.

## Cap. vi.

**A**D yet is ther another comē misery vnto al mē vnder the sōne. If se god gyue a mā riches / glozpe / & honour / & what so euer he can desyre: & yet he geueth him nat fre power to vse the but rather there shall come another vnknoūē & spende the: whiche is no lesse vanite thā greuous affliction.

affliction. If a mā had an. C. children & lyued neuer so longe: sparing all this whiche his goodes from him selfe / & at last wanting a place to bury in his decd body: I wolde iuge y chylde borne cast forth before the tyme better at ease than he. For this mā / as he is comē in / to be laughcd at / so goeth he his way again vnder darkenes / his name buried i obliuio he seeth nomore the sōne / he synneth no rest nother here nor ther / he knoweth vs nat / although he had lyued two thousande yere / yet is his mynde vnquiet. Come nat al togyther vnto one place: Every mannes labour / is to fill his mouth: but his mide wyll neuer be satisfyed. And what more hath the wyse than the fole? What helpeth it the poore / that he knoweth



weth wpsely to walke befoze the  
me liuyng. It is better to se that  
thyng which thou desirest / thā  
to desyre that thou cāest nat get  
And yet is this but vanite & mi-  
sery. what is it / y there is now  
borne. It is a man / whose mise-  
ry his very name declareth. And  
yet may he nat contende with hi  
that so made hi / sith he excelleth  
him in power. For if he so shuld  
do / vanite shulde shew her selfe  
ouercoinen of her own self. what  
therfoze hath man of him self but  
vanite & misery. who knoweth  
what is most expediēt for man li-  
uyng this lyfe of his vanite / whi-  
che is like a shadowe. or who cā  
tell a mā what shal folow hi vn-  
der y sonne. Cap. vii.

**B**etter is a good name / thā  
Bright precious oyntmētes  
And

And better is it to dye / than to be  
borne. Better is it to go in to the  
house of murnyng / thā of feastig.  
For in that house every man ly-  
uyng may cōsyder his ende. Bet-  
ter is murnyng thā laughter / for  
by murnyng the hert is correcte.  
And therfoze / the wisemā's herte  
is i the mournyng house. But cō-  
trarywys the foles mynde is in  
the house of mirth. It is more  
holsome to heare the rebuke of y  
wise / thā the swete musike of the  
fole. For the dissolut laughter of  
the fole. is lyke the crablinge of  
thornes sodely set on fyer vnder  
the pot / & this is also but vanite.  
who so doth vnright / bereth soze  
the wysse / & destroyeth the mylde  
hert. Better is y ende of a thige /  
than the begynnyng: & better is  
the pacient & mylde spirite / than  
the



the high mynde pufte vp. Be nat  
to heddy & sone angry: for wraath  
resteth in folles bosoms. Thynke  
nat with thy self / sayeng: howe  
happeneth it / that y<sup>e</sup> world / past  
be better than the that nowe are:  
for this is no wise question. wise  
dome is good with rycheffe & her  
itage / & profytable whyles thou  
art here: for ryches with wyses  
dom are a good buckler / but the  
knowlege of that wysedome gy  
ueth lyfe to hir possessour. Loke  
vp vnto the workes of god: and  
tell me who can make streight / y<sup>e</sup>  
he hath croked. In a good daye  
be glad / but yet in the meane tyme  
me obserue & wayte for the euyl  
daye: for both be created of god  
lest man shulde any other fynde.  
I haue espyed many thiges in y<sup>e</sup>  
dayes of my vanyte. Here / the  
iust

iust perissheth to his owne well  
doyng: & there / the wicked pro  
spereth longe in his mischef. Be  
nat therfore to iust nor to wyse /  
lest thou thyself perissh also. Nes  
ther be thou to wicked nor to for  
lyshe / lest thou sodenly dyest an  
euyl deeth. It is good for the / so  
to holde y<sup>e</sup> thing / that this slippe  
nat out of thy handes: for who  
so fereth god auoideth both these  
perylles. Wysedome mynstreth  
more strenght to the prudent / than  
x. the mightiest men of the cyte:  
And yet there is no mā vpon the  
erth / that doth good & synne nat.  
Welcme nat all that me say. Gyue  
nat eare to euery mānes talc / lest  
pauēture thou herest thyn own  
seruaūt speke y<sup>e</sup> by the / for thou  
knowest full well y<sup>e</sup> thou thyselfe  
often tymes also spekest y<sup>e</sup> by a  
nothcr



Ecclesiastes. Cap. vii.  
nother. Of al these maner thinges I haue had thozow wysedoe good experience. And than I thought/ I wyll be wyser: & here wisdom wēt farre fro me. She is now gone: & what thē? Depe & derke is the profoude secreete/ but who shall serche it? Than applied I my mynde to serche & fynde out wisdom & cōnyng: & to trye out the folysynes of the vngodly & the mad errours of the fonde: & I founde that sith a woman is more better thā deth it self/ whose hert is both nette & snare/ & her hādes chaynes & bādes; but who so god fauoureth he shall escape her/ whan the synner shalbe tangled & taken with her. But lo/ at laste this thinge haue I founde (sayth this precher) This thinge and that I serched to fynd knowlege/

Ecclesiastes Cap. vii.  
lege/ & yet cease I nat styll to en-  
quyre/ although I fynde it nat.  
Amonge a thousande men I can  
skante fynde one profytable/ but  
amonge so many women/ I fynde  
none at all. But lo/ this one thig  
haue I found/ that god in the be-  
ginnig made man iust & vpright  
but he with his posterite haue  
entangled thē selues with moche  
crafte & insynpte questions. But  
who is so wyse an interpretoure  
as to expowne and assoyle these  
thinges? Cap. viii.

Wisdom maketh freshe & a-  
mountable/ & cleareth a mannes  
countenance: but the angry  
vncircumspect is odious w<sup>o</sup>ut  
grace. Watte diligētly vpo y<sup>e</sup> big  
mouth to do his cōmādementes.  
obserue & take hede vnto thy oth  
made vnto hi/ for he is called god  
with



withdraw nat thy selfe lone out of  
his sight/nether enserch thou nat  
his dede/ nor whether he com iust  
ly vnto his kigdom. For he doth  
what it pleaseth him. The wordes  
of kinges are mighty & full of  
maiestye: & who is he y dare say  
vnto hi/ what doest thou: who so  
obeyeth his precept shall haue no  
harme. The hert of y wyse saith  
a dew tyme for euery thing to be  
done/ & attēperith hyselſe vnto oꝝ  
poxtunite: for euery thinge hath  
his tyme cōuenient. But y cala  
myte of me in the meane tyme is  
right greuouse & gret/ & manifolde  
is his misery: for what thinges  
be past he knoweth nat: and  
what is to com vpon hi. who can  
tel hi: It is nat in mānes power  
neither to lyue nor dye/ he cā nat  
holde i his bꝛeth / neither is it in  
his

his power to a boyd deth/nether  
hath he fre wyll to escew oꝝ shake  
of his crosse: no / nat his owne  
vngodlynes thā may nat deliuer  
the vngodly. All these thinges I  
marked/ applyeng my mynde di  
lygently to expende all thynges  
done vnder the sōne. And I per  
ceyued one mā ofte hauing domi  
nion ouer another into his owne  
distructyd. Also here I sawe cer  
tayne vngodly lately buried/ whi  
che were esteemed right holy/ and  
yet of all the cyte were they clene  
forgotten: noman nat once remē  
bering that euer there were any  
suche: whiche all is but very va  
nyte. Bycause that iugement &  
payne foloweth nat a none men  
nes vngodly dedes/ therfore is y  
synfull hert of man contynually  
more prone & redy to couple one



**Ecclesiastes. Cap. viii.**  
myschefe to a nother. Although  
the vngodly commytte neuer so  
moch synne / heapinge one synne  
vpon a nother an hundred folde /  
and hath here full longe lyfe : yet  
am I sure that they shall be blest  
sed that cleue to god / & fere his  
face : whan the vngodlye whiche  
fere nat god / shalbe punysshed /  
their lyfe vanysshing away lyke  
a shadow. Ouer this / yet espied  
I another gret vanyte i the erth  
I sawe many iuste men plaged  
as the euill / and punysshed / as  
though they commytted euen the  
dedes of the vngodly. And con-  
trary wyse. I sawe the vngodly  
prosperre in all thing / as though  
they had lyue as well as y godly  
& I sayd anone. And euē this is  
but vanyte : wherfore at laste I  
prayed a glad minde / and iuged  
nothig

**Ecclesiastes. Cap. viii.**  
nothig better for mā in this worl  
de / than to ete & drynke with ho-  
nest mirth in his labours / while  
he lyue / enioyeng this gladnesse  
as the gyft of god / and so vsyng  
it vnder the sonne. Furthermore  
I endeouored my selfe wysely to  
beholde the carefull and mysera-  
ble labours vpon the erthe. And  
I sawe some / often tymes / daye  
noz nyght taking their rest. I lo-  
ked vpon the meruelous workes  
of god : and I perceyued that of  
all the workes of god vnder the  
sonne / no man can serche out the  
cause noz gyue any rekenyngc :  
but that the more feruent he is to  
serche / the lesse he fyndeth. Al-  
though he thinke him selfe wyse  
to know it / yet shal he knowe hi  
self at last nothing at all / neither  
to knowe noz finde. **Cap. ix.**  
**C. ii. All**



**A** these reuolued with my  
 selfe / yet I endeouored to  
 serche further. And I foude that  
 there be both iust & wysse blyg  
 their dedes to serue them: & al ar  
 in the hāde of god: but yet is ther  
 no man that knoweth whom he /  
 amōge other / other loueth oz ha  
 teth: For it chaūseth a lyke / both  
 to the wicked & good / to the pure  
 & vnpure / both to the offerer & to  
 him that offereth nat. It happe  
 neth to the good / as it doth to sin  
 ners / to the periured / as to the  
 true swerer. Which thig / that is  
 to wytte / that all thynges indyffe  
 rently come as well to the one /  
 as to y tother / is the worst of all  
 that ar vnder the sōne. Wherefore  
 mānes hert swelleth in malyce / &  
 concyrueth in his own fōde mad  
 nes / vnto his graue. Whyle men  
 are

ar a lyue / they thynke them selfe  
 sure (for a dogge a lyue / is better  
 than a lyon dead) And yet they  
 know that they must dye: But y  
 dead / they know it nat / nether de  
 serue they any more. for their me  
 morial is buryed / so that they be  
 to no mā any further occasion / e  
 ther of loue / euy / oz hated / ney  
 ther haue any pte more i y world  
 of any thig vnder the sōne. wher  
 fore go & ete thy breed with ioye /  
 & drinke thy wyne with mythe:  
 For god is well pleased with thi  
 worke. Se therfore that thy clo  
 thes be euermore whyte / and thy  
 heed neuer with out oyntmētes /  
 (that is / be euer glad & ioyous)  
 Lede thy life iocūdely w<sup>t</sup> thy be  
 loued wyfe / while thou art here i  
 this bayne worlde / as longe as  
 god wyl suffre y: For thys is thy  
 porty



porcion both of thy life & labour/  
 whiche god hath gyue the vnder  
 the sonne. What so euer good be  
 de is offred vnto thy hande/do it  
 constātly/spedely/& boldely: for  
 in thy graue/vnto whiche thou  
 art bent to descende / there is no  
 thinge to do: there is neither eru  
 dition / cōninge / knowlege / nor  
 wysedom.ouer this / yet I tur  
 ned me to se how all thinges we  
 re done vnder the sonne. And I  
 espied y a man to hasty & swyfte/  
 was nothyng apte to rōne / nor  
 strength helped nat in batail: nor  
 circūspecte pūision for food & wi  
 ning: neither yet sharpe wylines  
 to helpe so haue riches: neither  
 coude cōninge bringe a man into  
 fauour: but that al this depēdeth  
 of time & fortune. Al mā knoweth  
 nomore his time of deth than the  
 fyfthe

fyfthe of her takynge w<sup>t</sup> the hoke  
 or birde of her snare / so sodenly  
 cometh deth vpon mā & taketh hi  
 at his time. Also I cōsydered wy  
 scly yet another thinge vnder the  
 sonne / & me thought it no small  
 wysedom. I saw a cite / nat very  
 gret nor yet full of people / & yet  
 was there a kinge of no smal pui  
 saūce besegig it & castyng vp bul  
 werkes & bankes against it. In  
 which cite there was a certain si  
 ple poze wyse man / by whose wil  
 dom the lytle cite might haue be  
 defended & delyuered frō their en  
 mies: but no mā regarded him: &  
 here a nō iuged I / wisdom to be  
 better than strēgth. Natwithsta  
 ding yet was this poze mannes  
 wysdom neglected / no mā in the  
 cite heryng hi. wherfore / y wor  
 des of y wise ar of more weight/  
 althos



although they be softly spoken  
than the lowde noyse of an vnwi  
se prince. Wherfore wysedom is  
better thā all their armour & har  
nes. And one ydle vnthristy man  
troubleth many good mē/no no  
ther wayes / thā the lytell lyghte  
flye mareth all the swetnes of the  
preciousse oyntmēt. Follyshnesse  
somtyme is better thā wysedom  
& honour. The herte of the wyle  
is in his right hande: but the fo  
les hert is in his lyfthande. The  
fole / do he his owne dedes neuer  
so follyshly hi selfe / yet thynketh  
he all other to be but foles. if any  
stronge furioseffecte cometh o  
uer the / for nat hauing thyn own  
will yet be nat moued. For to suf  
fer & sōtyme to leaue of thyn own  
wyl / represseth & styllleth moche  
hurte and losse. Cap. x.

And

And yet is there another mise  
rable calamyte vnder the sonne /  
that is to wyt / y gret ouersyght  
of rulers in pmoung & settinge  
vp foles in gret honours & digni  
te / suffering the richc i wisdom  
to sit styll in the dust. I saw sla  
ues ryde gloriously vpo palfres /  
& mē worthy to be pricely rulers  
go on fote lyke seruātes. He that  
dyggeth vp the pit shall him self  
fall into it. He that breketh vp y  
old rotten hedge shalbe first biten  
of the edder. Who so rolleth y sto  
ne shalbe most wery. And he that  
cleueth wode shall katche sonest  
harne of it. The blonter the axe  
is / y more labour it asketh to be  
made sharpe. Thus doth wys  
dom folow experience. A sedici  
ous secreete tale bearer with his  
backbiting is as euyl as y edder  
that sodenly stingeth er the hille.



The tōge of the wise hath a gret grace: but þ̄ foles lippes deuoure himself. For the begynning of his speche is folishnes / & thende is perylous & fonde madnesse. A fole maketh many wordes: & no man cā perceiue neither taile nor head of his tale. The inforcemētes of foles prosper nat / bycause they can nat go the right way in to the cite. Wo be to þ̄ lande whose kinge is but a childe / & whose rulers ete erly. But happy is þ̄ lande whose kinge is clere & strōge / & whose rulers ete nat to erly. & that for their bodely sustinance & nat to paumpere their lustes. For thozowe ignaue and newth the beemes of þ̄ house synke downe: & thozow ydle handes it rayneth thozow þ̄ house rofe. They prepare theyr mete vnto pleasure and laughter / & make their wyne

to make mery the lyuinge: vnto whose noughtynes / money must minstre all thyng. Cōspyre nat / nor thinke thou non euyl agēst þ̄ king / nor say no hurt agēst the ryche / no / nat i thy secret chābre: for the foules of the ayre wil cary them the voice of thy wordes / & wynged messengers wyll vtter thy thoughtes. Cap. xi.

Of liberall almyes this is spokē  
**Q**aste forth thy brede vpon the ouerflowing waters / and thou shalt fynde it agayn in tyme to come. Deale it amonge seven & eight / for thou knowest nat what dardth & calamyte shall fall vpon the erthe. If the cloudes be full / they powre downe rayne vpon the erthe. If the tree be cut downe / where so euer it falleth / whether it be toward þ̄ south or agēst the north / there lieth it styll.



Who so curiously obserueth and  
wayteth vpon the wynde / he shall  
neuer sowe: Neither shall he ne-  
uer reape that seeth the cloudes.  
As thou neither knowest y waye  
of the winde. nor the iointes knit-  
ting togider the bones in the mo-  
thers wōbe: so maist thou nat ser-  
che out y werk of god cuer whe-  
re so diuersely wrought. Sowe  
thy seaderly / neither let thy hāde  
cease at euen: for thou canste nat  
tell whether in this tyme or that  
which shal take: & if what is sow-  
ne at both times take / it is so mo-  
che the better. The light is plea-  
saunt / & iocunde is it to se the sōne  
Lyue a mā neuer so longe in cōti-  
nuall mirth: yet hath he left him  
this corraspe / to consyder y his  
best dayes be past & the lenger he  
lyueth y more labour & misery a-  
bideth hī / which al is but vanite.

**B**e mery therfor (yōge mā)  
in thy yough / and take a  
glad hert vnto the while thou art  
lusty / take thy pleasure accordig  
to thy minde: but yet shalte thou  
well know / that for all these thin-  
ges / god will call the vnto tuge-  
mēt. Wrath & heuynes / put them  
ferre frō thy hert / & cōuaye disea-  
ses from thy body / and yet is thy  
childhed & yough both but vani-  
te. Remēbre thy maker therfore  
in thy yough before those heuy  
carefull calamitouse dayes come:  
wher in for thy wofull age thou  
shalt say: These dayes please me  
nothyng. Remēbre thy maker (I  
say) erth / sonne / the dayes / mōne  
& starres / be made derke / and the  
swete showers past / y heuy clou-  
des be retourned / euen the tyme  
whan the keepers of y house shal  
tremble & quake & the strōge shal



stoupe & crepe away / & myllers  
shall stande ydle / bycause there  
shalbe so fewe : and the eye wynd-  
owes shalbe shut vp with y do-  
re of derkenes / whā the gates of  
the stretes shalbe locked vp / and  
the myllers voyce made small &  
saite / & shalbe awake at the sōge  
of the byrde / whā all the dought-  
ters of musyke be wakenedesse / &  
thou going forth shall tremble &  
stay at the high stōbelyng block  
in the way : whā the Allmande tre  
shall flourish / & the locust laden  
with many cares enclyueth to y  
groude / al pleasure fayling him.  
For euen hitherwards goth mā /  
perpetually there to dwell : and  
the murners shal go about i the  
stretes. Remembre (I saye) thy  
maker / before the syluer lyne be  
taken awaye / and the golden vp-  
sprynges be sonke downe / & the

bucket of the well catche ristes /  
and the well wheelcs be broken :  
For dust must retourne and be re-  
solued in to erth / as it was in the  
begynning : But the spiryt shall  
tourne in to god agayne whiche  
gaue it. All thinges ar nat elles  
than vanyte (sayde the precher)  
ye / euen very vanyte.

¶ This precher & autour of this  
lytell boke / excellynge nat onely  
in wysdom / but also in teching y  
people knowlege and vnderstan-  
ding of thinges : Consydered &  
serched out euery thyng / & com-  
pyled many sēcences. He studyed  
also dilygently to fynde out pro-  
fyttable and pure speche / with no  
lesse grace than eloquēce / & wrot  
the very worde of trowthe frely.  
These wordes of y wise beig bo-  
th spear & stinge / were gathered  
and



**Ecclesiastes.**      **Cap. xli.**  
and wryten by the comē maisters  
& rulers / endyted & delyuered of  
a certayn pastour & precher. We  
ware therfore ( my sonne ) of any  
other many word; mo. For there  
is neither mesure nor ende i wry-  
tyng boke. And many prechers  
diuersely & to oft prechige to the  
people / at but tediousse vnto the &  
wery the. Nowe therfore let vs  
here y briez cōclusion of all. Here  
god & kepe his cōmandementes.  
For this belongeth al alike vnto  
euery mā. For god shal cal all y  
dedes of euery mortall man in to  
iugemēt / & shal reuele & lay open  
all their secretes bothe good and  
badde.      **Finis.**

**¶** Imprinted at London by  
Tho. Godfray.  
**¶** Cum priuilegio.